

Dodge County

Clara Menger Frings

Clara was born in Hartford (WI) on July 30, 1900 to Mary Moser and Joe Menger. She spent her childhood on farms, first in Theresa for 20 years and then in the town of Hustisford. Clara married Otto Frings in 1924; their marriage lasted for 68½ years until his death. Clara lives with “my best friend, Tony, my dog.” She has two daughters, three grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Germaine Geschel

Kaukauna in Outagamie County was birthplace for Germaine on April 10, 1900. She attended the Oshkosh Teachers College and taught school in Iron Mountain, Michigan and in Kaukauna. In 1931 she married William Geschel.

Germaine has lived in Beaver Dam since her marriage. Always an excellent seamstress and bridge player, she also continues to have a good sense of humor. She has a daughter, Mary Jo, a son-in-law, Tod Wise and three grandchildren.

Door County

Josephine Simon

One of 15 children, Josephine was born on June 11, 1897 in Jacksonport. She attended normal school at Algoma and then married William J. Simon, a farmer. In the 1930s, he gave up farming to become a builder. They had six children.

Josephine was a creative homemaker who loved entertain-ing. She also enjoyed dressmaking, knitting, crocheting and gardening. She looks forward to visiting with family and friends.

Douglas County

Evelyn Elmgren

Born in Superior on September 25, 1900, Evelyn has lived there most of her life. As a young woman, she worked in her father's grocery store and then went to Duluth where she worked at Wohl's Department Store. She met Edward Elmgren at the Solon Springs golf course. They were married in 1932 and had two sons. Evelyn was a member of the Peony Garden Club and often took first place for flower arranging at the Douglas County fair.

Dunn County

Lillian Galbreath

One of four children, Lillian was born on a farm in Hardwick, Minnesota on August 16, 1898. She started working at a general merchandise store at the age of 14. Later, when she married, she and her husband started their own produce business in Menomonie. After their daughter and son were grown, Lillian's husband died, and she went out to California to live with her daughter. Recently, she came to Dunn County where she has many friends and family.

Evan Norman

The oldest of three children, Evan was born on July 17, 1899 in Tennessee. She went to school through the third grade and remembers the parties they had in school. She worked in the cotton mills from the time she was 12 years old until she was 54. She married and raised six children. In 1966, she moved to Wisconsin. Because there have been so many changes in the world since her childhood, she says, "It's a different world."

Mildred Sneen

Mildred was born at home in Menomonie, on November 22, 1899. At the age of 24, she and Emil Sneen eloped and were married in Stillwater, Minnesota, but returned to Menomonie, where Emil worked for the postal system and Mildred opened a store called "The Style Shop." The shop was on Main Street in downtown Menomonie for 60 years. Mildred's secret for living a long life is to "always stay busy and keep your mind working."

Edna Taylor

Edna's earliest memory is of coasting down a hill in a wagon in Iowa. She married her childhood sweetheart and lived happily for 30 years until his untimely death of a heart attack.

Edna was the first female in Mt. Pleasant, Iowa to complete high school and to graduate from college as a teacher. She had to get permission from the college to study education as she was married, and married women were not allowed to teach. Her husband was a Methodist minister who became a teacher and then a school principal. Edna still marvels at the change in the highway system, comparing the difference in the roads between Mt. Pleasant, Iowa and Superior, Wisconsin from her youth to today.

Dunn County

Gertrude Wagner Thompson

Gertrude was born on November 28, 1901 in Menomonie, where she spent her entire life. Some of her strongest memories are of tragic events that resulted in a great loss. Her earliest memory is of the death of her seven-year-old sister in a fire at a neighbor's house. Her mother died when Gertrude was going into the eighth grade. Being the only girl in the family, Gertrude had to stay home and tend to the family; thus, she did not go to high school.

A happier memory is of the first car she ever saw. And a happier thought is of the good health she has had in her long life.

Florence Welcome

Born on March 11, 1900 and raised on a farm near Hancock in southeastern Wisconsin, Florence always loved the out-of-doors and nature. She and her husband regularly camped out with their five children. The whole family would travel to their trailer and camp out in tents. Florence gathered food from the surrounding woods that she cooked for their meals. Eventually, a cabin replaced the trailer. Florence says, "That cabin holds a lot of great memories."

Florence is proud of her children and their accomplishments. She enjoys talking about modern technology and says, "When I was a child I would never have imagined the world as it is today."

Eau Claire County

Alma Volbrecht Roesler

Alma was born on January 12, 1900. She married Benjamin Roesler and went to live with Ben's parents on the Roesler farm that had been settled in the 1860s. Ben and Alma had one daughter, Lois, who lives in Florida. Alma loves music and played the organ at church for many years. After Ben died, she lived alone before moving to a nursing home.

Gertrude Ziemann

Gertrude lived all her life in Fall Creek, where she was born on October 31, 1900. Her father was a businessman – he had a hardware and harness shop. Gertrude's brothers went into their father's business and she went to work at the local bank where she became a vice-president.

Gertrude built a cabin on the Eau Claire River where she entertained friends and family. A friend says, "Gertrude is never sick and doesn't visit doctors. I know her to be a very kind and friendly person."

Eau Claire County

"Must keep going" is his usual line. "No point quitting when you're 99."

From a poem *Almost a Century* written by Bob Graham in 1998 about his father.

Joe Graham

Joe was born on October 3, 1899, in Allerton, Illinois. Always active, he was a member of one of the first Boy Scout troops in this country. He was also captain of his high school basketball team. He became a photographer and opened the Graham Studios in Wisconsin Dells where he sold photographs he had taken and developed and then hand-painted. He also filmed 16mm movies that are now on video tape. Joe married and had three children. He encouraged them all to go to college.

For a time, Joe and his wife owned a restaurant in Augusta (WI) but always had time to volunteer: he was a volunteer fireman, was involved in civil defense during World War II, and during the Korean War was director of the local ground observers for the Air Force.

Always reaching out to others, the Grahams often had people who needed help staying at their house, and in his later years, Joe gave land to the community for an industrial park.

Anna Fletchcock Zimmerman

Born on December 12, 1896, Anna started to support herself when she was 14 years old by caring for a neighbor's (the Kopplins) seven children. Her job was to keep track of them all and to keep them clean and fed. Anna did this until she married Matt Zimmerman and no longer had to work outside her home. She and Matt had no children, and neighbors thought Anna had had all she wanted of children when she was young.

Florence County

Famie Holt

Famie was born on January 21, 1900 in Ontario (WI). She met her future husband in Ontario and they married when she was 18. They had two daughters. He died in World War I; Famie never remarried.

When she was 44 years old, Famie moved to Tomah, where she worked for the Veterans Administration Hospital. After she retired, she moved back to Ontario to be

near her daughter. Famie has five grandchildren and five great-grandchildren. She is a kind woman and enjoys music and friends.

Fond du Lac County

Martha De Vries

Martha's first 13 years of life were in the Netherlands where she was born on January 20, 1899. When she came to America, she saw bananas for the first time and ate them skin and all. The family settled in Waupun. Six other families from Holland followed.

Martha met her husband-to-be, Geraam De Vries, at a Young People's Society in Randolph.

After they were married, Geraam farmed for 20 years, then worked in a lumberyard until he was 84. Martha worked at Waupun Memorial Hospital for 18 years. She enjoys playing scrabble.

Leona Tichenor

Leona was born on May 20, 1899 in Darlington. She has fond memories of being driven to school in the winter in a horse-drawn sleigh. She graduated from the University of Nebraska and the University of Colorado. She then taught school, specializing in business courses.

Leona married twice, in 1950 to Melvin Smith who died in 1957, and in 1959 to Lauren Tichenor. During the 1960s, they lived in Lubbock, Texas; Leona is most proud of the volunteer work that she did at a hospital there where she was in charge of fund-raising.

To what does she credit her longevity? "Breathing, I guess," she laughs.

Forest County

William Bleche

Born on May 20, 1900 in Indiana, William went through the Indiana public school system. He became an engineer and spent most of his adult life in DePere. He retired in 1974 when the company he worked for closed. William enjoyed his retirement living in the Town of Goodman. His pleasant smile and manner have brought him many friends.

Hilda Cook

Hilda was born to Eugene and Ida Eastman in Iola on February 9, 1900. Hilda had two brothers and three sisters. She married Robert Cook and they had four children.

Employed for many years as a housekeeper, Hilda says, "My life and my marriage were good. I miss Robert, who died 10 years ago."

Hilda is very proud of her children and their achievements, and she knows the tragedy of war, having lost a son during World War II.

Forest County

Nina Statezny

Nina was one of five children born to James and Emma Feight on December 22, 1901. Her father was a carpenter and farmer, her mother a homemaker. Nina attended school through the eighth grade. She married Paul Statezny and they raised eight children. Widowed now, she looks forward to seeing her grandchildren and great-grandchildren. She enjoys playing cards and solving word puzzles.

Elizabeth Hoffman

"Liz" was born on May 29, 1896 in Bevent, the daughter of Polish immigrants. She cared for her stepbrother and sister while their parents worked in the fields.

Liz left home at an early age and married Joseph Hoffman. They moved to Mole Lake where they cleared land for a home and farm; they raised eight children.

During the Depression, Joseph went off to work in logging camps while Liz stayed at home where she trapped rabbits for food, fished, gardened, sheared sheep, made soap, and preserved food for the winter. She loved to cook (even over a wood fire) and enjoyed the community social gatherings on weekends. Liz is proud of her family and of her ability to work hard and be independent.

Ida "Pearl" Stubbs

Born on September 6, 1898 in Nobelsville, Indiana to William and Elizabeth Lees, Pearl had three sisters and a brother. She married Walter Stubbs; they had three daughters. The family farmed for many years in the Wabeno area. After 75 years of what Pearl terms "a wonderful marriage," she was greatly saddened by her husband's death in 1992.

Pearl enjoys crocheting and making gifts for others.

Grant County

Paloma "Polly" Penniston

Born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, on January 22, 1898, Polly spent her childhood as the daughter of a minister living in Texas, Oklahoma, Missouri and finally Wisconsin.

After high school she clerked in retail stores and was a church pianist. She married Howard Penniston and they had five children; two are still alive.

Polly has vivid memories of revival meetings held by her father. She remembers them as being “very impressive.” She says, “I enjoyed doing Christian work so much.” Her advice: “Do the right thing.” She believes this is what most people try to do.

Grant County

Mabel Hansen

Mabel was born on August 3, 1899 in Hartford, Iowa. The family then moved to Rewey. After completing high school, Mabel was trained as a librarian. She married Walter Hansen with whom she had four children.

Mabel always loved to read and continues to enjoy it; she subscribes to two newspapers. It is not surprising that she considers electric lights an important invention of the 20th century. She recalls washing lampshades daily and filling the lamps with kerosene. She also considers automobiles and paved roads important developments that opened up life. She recalls going by horse and buggy to have class pictures taken and then having to hurry home when it started to rain because the roads would become muddy and impassable.

Mabel shares that she is a Daughter of the American Revolution (D.A.R.) and that her family has fought in every American war. Both of Mabel’s sons fought in World War II. “Take each day as it comes and do the best you can with whatever it holds,” is Mabel’s philosophy.

Clarence Nuti

Clarence’s memory is considered amazing. Born on November 8, 1898, he remembers the newspaper headlines the day the Titanic sank and when the U. S. declared war on Germany in World War I. He also remembers his first car, a Veele with the steering wheel on the right.

Clarence graduated from Minnesota College and joined the Valentine Opera Company in Chicago singing light opera. He also sang in silent movie houses before the main feature. His career ended with the Depression. He returned to his family’s farm in Glen Haven and through his brother-in-law, Dick Metcalf, got into growing experimental hybrid corn. This led to an exciting career as a farmer and research director of the new Pride Seed Company that he and Dick started. Clarence is still honored for the corn hybrids he developed.

Clarence has never stopped singing. He dabbles in the stock market and writes poetry. He hopes that farming as a way of life won’t disappear. “Those who like it, really love it,” he says.

Grant County

Clarence Trankle

Clarence was born in North Mifflin on July 23, 1898. He and his twin sister were the youngest of five children. He attended Montfort High School and in 1922 married Clara Moen. They farmed through the Depression when they received 10¢ a pound for hogs, 8¢ a pound for cattle and 25¢ for a dozen eggs.

Clarence and his wife retired from farming in 1945 and moved to Fennimore where he became a carpenter and drove a school bus. He became involved with town government, was a council member and then became mayor of Fennimore. Clarence was instrumental in bringing new industry and the Southwest Technical College to the town.

Green County

Anna Balsiger

At 110 years of age, Anna is considered a miracle in Green County. She was born on February 11, 1889 on a farm in Mt. Pleasant. Anna married Christ Balsiger, a Swiss cheesemaker and they had five children. After her husband died in 1969, Anna retired to Monroe.

Friends recall hearing Anna play the piano when she was 103, and seeing her pick berries at 6 a.m. when she was 106. She had a flower garden until she was 109, when she broke her hip. She still enjoys being included in activities with her children.

Green Lake County

Esther Beilke

The youngest of five children, Esther was born on January 12, 1899. She says, "I was a born tomboy. Of course I had to do 'girl' things like washing dishes, but I loved driving the horses."

As a young woman, she learned the millinery trade and in 1932 bought a store in Waupun. Beilke's Ladies Apparel was well known there for many years. In 1946, Esther got a 20-year lease at \$25 a month rent. "Can you believe it?" she marvels. In 1966 she sold the store and took a month's trip to Europe.

Esther has always been active in her church – in the choir for many years and as a Bible schoolteacher. “I’ve had a wonderful life. I’ve never had very good health, but by the grace of God, I’m still here.”

Green Lake County

Rosella Dalton

Born on May 3, 1895 in Columbia County, Rosella’s mother died two weeks later and Rosella was raised by her grandparents. She recalls the stories they told her about travel in Wisconsin and trading with Native Americans. Rosella had a horse, Nobby, that she rode everywhere. She recalls, too, how much fun it was going to a one-room school.

Rosella married Earl Dalton in 1917. They lived on the Dalton homestead and raised two children. “When the North-western Railroad was built from Chicago to Minneapolis in 1911, the company bought land from my husband’s family and named the station Dalton. It became a town with three grocery stores, a clothing store, hotel, and doctor.”

“I credit my long life to faith, good health and hard work.”

Rosella Dalton

Iron County

John Lupino

Born in Sicily, Italy on June 15, 1901, John came to America when he was 10 years old. Besides working for the Chicago & North-western Railroad for 17 years, he was also a full-time farmer and owned 20 milking cows.

At the age of 57, John went to Sicily where he met and married Franka Franasia. They returned to the United States and settled in northern Wisconsin where they have lived ever since. They have a son and daughter and three grandchildren. After retiring, John worked as a part-time maintenance man until he was 92.

John always enjoyed having a garden and sharing his vegetables. He also enjoyed reading; now he prefers television. His words of wisdom: “Work hard, eat properly, get enough sleep and take time for your family.” He also says, “The earth is a good place and everyone needs to help take care of it.”

Jackson County

Mary Barron Adams

Mary was born in Black River Falls in 1895, one of eight children. Her father, Joseph Barron, was a logging foreman and spent the winters at a logging camp in northern Minnesota, leaving his wife to raise the children by herself from fall until spring.

Mary graduated from Black River Falls High School in 1914. She attended Superior Teacher's College in 1915 and then married Herbert Adams. They had two sons, Larry and Harold. Herbert died in 1948.

In the terrible flood of 1911 that devastated Black River Falls, Mary's grandmother's Norwegian trunk was washed away. Mary found the trunk, and it was restored. It now holds a place of honor in the family.

Emily Bohac

Born in Chicago in 1897, Emily had five brothers and sisters. As a young woman, Emily worked at the Western Electric Company, making microphones for World War I airplanes. Joseph Bohac was a co-worker; they married and had three children.

The family left Chicago and moved to Wisconsin where Emily's mother and two brothers farmed near the town of Komensky. In 1937, they moved to a larger farm near Hawk Island. Joseph retired and they moved to Alma Center and then to a mobile home in Hixton. Joseph died in 1988 and Emily stayed on until she was 95.

Emily recalls that they got electricity in 1938 and bought their first tractor for \$800 in 1941. She knows that as each change occurred, their life became easier.

Cora Christianson

Cora was born on December 9, 1899 in Black River Falls and grew up having a grocery store within walking distance. Cora doesn't recall that she or her 11 brothers and sisters had to do chores. She does recall sledding, skiing and family picnics.

Cora's father was a traveling salesman for International Harvester Company, but he never drove a car. The family moved to Sparta where the train stopped, making travel easier for him. After high school and teacher's college, Cora taught in a country school until she married Alfred Christianson in 1929. Alfred was a carpenter and farmer. The couple liked touring in the West. After Alfred's death in 1973, Cora continued living in her own home. When she was 89, she and a sister went "out east." Cora still enjoys visiting with friends and family.

Jackson County

Mabel Johnson

Mabel was born to Norwegian immigrants on September 25, 1899 in Hixton. The family later settled on a farm nearby that is still in the family. Mabel grew up enjoying basket socials, barn dances and playing checkers and cards.

Mabel married Alvin Johnson and they had seven children. She recalls washing clothes by hand, using homemade lye soap – “boiling, rinsing, bluing and wringing out.” Cooking included a “big farm breakfast” and taking a snack out to the men in the fields at 10 a.m. and 3 p.m.

Alvin and Mabel enjoyed retirement for several years before Alvin died in 1968. Mabel moved to Hixton in 1989. She still likes to bake bread.

Jefferson County

Sylvester “Silver” Weiler

Born in Medford on December 31, 1901, Sylvester went to work for the Pabst Farms in Oconomowoc. He rose to head herdsman, a position he held until retiring in 1964. He is credited with improving herds all over the world by selling the outstanding Pabst cattle for breeding. Sylvester has received many honors for his work in cattle breeding. He is an honorary member of the UW Saddle and Sirloin Club and winner of the “Man on the Farm Blue Ribbon” for developing a superior herd of Holsteins. For four years he led the National Honor List as Pabst Farm Holsteins won with the three-generation combination of sire, son and grandson.

Sylvester married Lorena Barbelt. They had four children and now have many grandchildren, great-grandchildren and great-great-grandchildren. “Silver’s” hobbies include hunting moose in British Columbia and fishing.

Juneau County

Dessie Barry

Dessie was born on September 12, 1897 in Sparta. She became a secretary at the Sparta Herald where she met her future husband, Clarence Barry. They married in 1924 and had four children. In 1927 they moved to Portage and opened an advertising agency. During World War II, Dessie worked at Badger Ordnance. In 1971 they moved to Camp Douglas where Dessie now spends her summers. She winters in California with her daughter.

Juneau County

Ted Board

Ted's great-grandfather came to Wisconsin in 1849 from England. In 1857 the family received a Swamp Land Grant near Elroy. The Board family still lives in the area. Ted was born on March 18, 1900. The family lived near their grandparents and Ted often went with his grandfather to Civil War reunions and listened to the "old timers" tell their war stories.

In 1924, Ted married Beulah Gibney and they bought the Board family farm. Ted remembers Governor Tommy Thompson whose family were neighbors when Tommy was a youngster. When asked about Tommy becoming governor, without hesitation, Ted said, "Tommy was always a little smarter than the rest of us."

Ted and Beulah had no children, but Bob Hart (president of the Bank of Elroy) was the child of a friend and was loved like a son by Ted and Beulah.

Mary Reynolds

A New Year's baby, Mary Ganz was born on January 1, 1893. Weighing less than four pounds at birth, she was kept warm in a box on the open oven door. Her mother died when Mary was 11, and two years later Mary left school to help at home. The family moved to a farm at Lake Como where Mary met and married Howard Reynolds. They had two children. In 1974 they celebrated 60 years of marriage. After Howard's death, Mary moved to Juneau to be near her daughter.

Kenosha County

Hannah Stocker

Hannah was born in Zumbrota, Minnesota on September 21, 1900. She says that she was raised in a nice family with two brothers and a sister. She remembers that they had no electricity and used kerosene lamps. To Hannah, getting an education is a good goal. "I graduated from the University of Minnesota," she says, adding, "I taught algebra." Her advice: "Go to school and take it seriously. Get as much out of it as you can."

Kenosha County

Laura Pike

Laura was born on February 26, 1898 in Lukas, Iowa, a mining town. With five brothers, “being an only girl made my life an adventure, full of mischief.” She met her husband in Iowa where they raised their family until their move to Kenosha in 1929.

“Life was not easy – no running water, no electricity, only an outdoor toilet,” Laura recalls.

Laura’s wish to visit Iowa was granted last summer when her family planned a trip there. Twelve relatives went, with Laura appointed “back seat driver.” She didn’t sleep on the 800-mile trip, but she admits to “snoozing on the way back.” They visited the mine where Laura’s father worked, the church she attended and the gravesites of family members. It was all as she remembered.

“In Lucas, Iowa, we saw the John L. Lewis museum across the street from where we lived. The museum is in the house he lived in when he was the coal miners’ union representative.” Laura Pike

Kewaunee County

Mary Ferrier

One of 12 children, Mary Liebergen was born on February 2, 1900. In 1920, she married Desire Ferrier, a farmer, and they raised 10 children.

In 1946, Desire died. Mary continued to run the farm until 1958 when she sold it. She then bought a home in Green Bay. At age 59 Mary took her first outside job, cleaning offices at night. Her children took turns driving her to and from work. She says she loved her job. Mary always enjoyed crocheting and made beautiful afghans for her children and grandchildren. She plays sheepshead every Friday. Her daughter Jean says, “Mom has done so well because of the closeness of the family.”

Theresa Schleis

Her father owned a flour mill in Montpelier when Theresa was born on September 26, 1896. She married John Schleis when she was 23 and they bought a farm in Franklin. Theresa loved gardening and always had a garden of beautiful flowers. She has four children, 13 grandchildren, 20 great-grandchildren and eight great-great-grandchildren.

What amazes Theresa the most is how expensive everything is today compared to 50 or 60 years ago. She is sociable and enjoys visiting with all of her family.